

SLOVAK REPUBLIC



Slovakia The objective of U.S. security assistance to Slovakia is to support continued defense reform and further Slovakia's continuing contribution to NATO operations and regional stability. The Slovak government disagrees with some U.S. foreign policy objectives and is pursuing a more Eurocentric foreign policy. U.S. assistance provides the opportunity to encourage Slovakia to continue to modernize its armed forces, avoid scaling back its cooperation with NATO- or U.S.-led peacekeeping efforts, increase the number of its forces in Afghanistan, and to moderate caveats on the use of its troops there. The continuation of U.S. assistance towards the achievement of peace and security objectives at this time will help Slovakia consolidate its gains and maintain its development as a positive and stabilizing influence among its neighbors in the region and globally.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Slovakia became a member of NATO on March 29, 2004 and joined the EU in May 2004. Slovakia is a member of the United Nations and participates in its specialized agencies. It is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the OECD. It also is part of the Visegrad Four (Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Poland), a forum for discussing areas of common concern. On December 21, 2007, Slovakia joined the Schengen zone. Slovakia maintains diplomatic relations with 134 countries. There are 35 embassies and 26 honorary consulates in Bratislava.

Twenty-one Slovak civilians served in EU-led foreign crisis operations in 2008, including 19 police officers, one military expert, and one customs officer.

U.S.-SLOVAKIA RELATIONS

The fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1989 and the subsequent split of the two republics on January 1, 1993, allowed for renewed cooperation between the United States and Slovakia. The election of a pro-Western, reformist government in late 1998 further boosted close ties between the countries. The United States delivered more than \$200 million in official direct assistance after 1990 to support the rebuilding of a healthy democracy and market economy in Slovakia, primarily through programs administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Slovakia and the United States retain strong diplomatic ties and cooperate in the military and law enforcement areas. The U.S. Department of Defense programs have contributed significantly to Slovak military reforms.

Millions of Americans have their roots in Slovakia, and many retain strong cultural and familial ties to the Slovak Republic. President Woodrow Wilson and the United States played a major role in the establishment of the original Czechoslovak state on October 28, 1918, and President Wilson's Fourteen Points were the basis for the union of the Czechs and Slovaks. Tomas Masaryk, the father of the Czechoslovak state and its first president, visited the United States during World War I and used the U.S. Constitution as a model for the first Czechoslovak Constitution.

Peace and Security: U.S. assistance promotes NATO interoperability and capabilities within the Slovak Armed Forces. Funds will be used to support the development of niche capabilities for NATO, strengthen Slovakia's ability to contribute to NATO peacekeeping missions, and foster a better prepared and more

interoperable combat force at tactical and operational levels. Additionally, funding will provide equipment and training to further defense reform and promote modernization. These programs will be implemented through the U.S. Department of Defense.